For Immediate Release   John Dell'Osso
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Point Reyes National Seashore Selected
as a National Marine Debris Monitoring Site

Point Reyes National Seashore has been selected by the Center for Marine Conservation as a National Marine Debris Monitoring site. This program is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. The collected data is utilized by the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the National Park Service to monitor sources of increasing marine debris which has become a national concern.

The National Marine Debris Monitoring Program (NMDMP) utilizes various volunteer groups to monitor specifically selected beaches throughout the United States for marine debris This scientific study monitors the occurrence of thirty specific marine debris items over a five-year period. The Program has been successfully established at 80 sites along the Gulf and Southeast coastlines and now is expanding to an additional 60 sites along Western and Northeast coastlines. The Program is designed to answer two specific questions: 1) Is the amount of debris on our coastlines decreasing? and 2) What are the major sources of the debris?

RCA Beach, located near the southern boundary of Point Reyes National Seashore, has been selected as the local survey site. A beach study area of 500 meters in length has been determined and mapped where the data collection and beach cleanup will occur. The Bolinas School sixth grade class, led by their teacher Don Jolly, will be participating in the monthly data collection and beach cleanups over a five year period.

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Lisa Scafidi, Program Specialist with the Center for Marine Conservation stated, "Point Reyes National Seashore is the first site established on the west coast by the NMDMP. This site, along with other 140 sites throughout the country, will be monitored over the next five years to follow status and international trends in marine debris distribution."

The National Marine Debris Monitoring Program is a component of Point Reyes National Seashore's ecological vital signs monitoring program. This program will assemble and synthesize baseline inventory data describing the natural resources at Point Reyes and will monitor those resources at regular intervals to detect or predict changes. The resulting information will be analyzed to detect changes that may require intervention and to provide reference points for comparison with other environments.

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